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REGENTS TO REVIEW PROCESS FOR \$6.6 MILLION IN RESEARCH GRANTS

BATON ROUGE -- The Louisiana Board of Regents for public postsecondary education is scheduled at Thursday's (Feb. 22) board meeting to review its process for awarding almost \$6.6 million in a second round of medical research grants made possible by Louisiana's tobacco settlement money.

On Feb. 22, the Regents are expected to review the process by which universities are invited to submit proposals to receive grants from the \$6.6 million in Millennium Trust Health Excellence Fund money available this year. Campuses must submit their proposals by the end of July. Those proposals will be reviewed by a team of experts in August and September and awarded by the end of the year.

The purpose of the Millennium Trust Health Excellence Fund, created by voters in 1999 by an amendment to the state constitution, is to launch and partially fund major campus and inter-campus research centers in advanced health care sciences.

Last year Regents awarded approximately \$7.7 million from the Millennium Trust Health Excellence Fund to help create and fund nine health research centers at four institutions. Receiving the grants were LSU, LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, and Tulane University in New Orleans.

Grant proposals are evaluated by teams of outside consultants. Although this year's team will not be selected until this summer, last year's panel included scientists from various institutions, including the National Institutes of Health, Yale University School of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, University of California, University of California-Berkeley, University of New Mexico Cancer Research and Treatment Center and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

Other items on Thursday's agenda include:

- Governor Foster's chief of staff Stephen Perry is scheduled to give Regents an overview of the upcoming legislative sessions.
- An update on the proposed new Master Plan for Postsecondary Education. The board is scheduled to take action on the new master plan at its March 22 meeting. The plan includes an admissions criteria framework for all public four-year universities.
